

“Salmon are an icon of Northwest culture and the foundation of the health of our watersheds. If the salmon are not doing well, our watersheds are not doing well, and neither are we.” Washington Governor Chris Gregoire

21st Century **Salmon & Steelhead** Initiative

PLOTTING A COURSE TO WILD FISH RECOVERY AND
SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES OVER FIFTY YEARS

A new integrated management framework to implement:

- six salmon recovery plans
- hatchery reform
- habitat protection and recovery
- state-tribal co-management
- new strategic partnerships
- sustainable fisheries



Washington
Department of
**FISH and
WILDLIFE**

While salmon have been on the decline for a century, in the last decade alone, 167 populations of salmon and steelhead in Washington State have been added to the federal endangered species list (ESA).

“The ESA listings were a loud and clear warning that unless we changed our ways, we were going to lose a species that’s a fundamental part of our biological and cultural heritage. It is hard to imagine living in the State of Washington and Pacific Northwest without wild salmon.”

U.S. Congressman
Norm Dicks

Dramatic declines in wild salmon and the habitat necessary to support them call for a bold response

Over the last decade, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has worked intensively with tribal governments and our salmon recovery partners to restore salmon and steelhead, provide recreational opportunities, and support economically viable and sustainable fisheries.

PACIFIC SALMON TREATY REDUCES CANADIAN CATCH

We played a key role in negotiating a reduction in Canadian and Alaskan Chinook catch by nearly a million fish over the next 10 years, returning Washington salmon to Washington rivers.

HATCHERY REFORM

We conducted with the Hatchery Scientific Review Group an evaluation of 187 hatchery programs and initiated program changes and millions of dollars of facility improvements.

HABITAT RESTORATION

We helped the State’s Lead Entity program and Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups implement over 3,000 projects to protect and restore salmon habitat.

RECOVERY PLANS

We worked with Regional Salmon Recovery Boards to create six salmon recovery plans mandated by the federal Endangered Species Act.

FEDERAL DISASTER RELIEF FOR COASTAL FISHERIES

We worked with the Governor’s Office to secure federal disaster relief in 2008 for unprecedented fisheries restrictions off the west coast of the United States.

SELECTIVE FISHERIES

We made hatchery fish the backbone of state fisheries, marking them to distinguish them from wild fish and to provide fishing opportunities.

NEW STEELHEAD MANAGEMENT PLAN

We redefined steelhead conservation policies statewide based on new information about the biology and life history of Washington’s State Fish.

But we need to do more– and **more strategically**





PROACTIVE SALMON MANAGEMENT FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Big challenges for wild salmon and steelhead require that management and recovery efforts be more strategic than ever. WDFW must: support the work of our partners to restore and protect habitat; ensure fisheries protect wild populations; and reform hatchery programs.

There wasn't a blueprint for how to accomplish this all at once— so we made one.

WDFW formed a planning team—with expertise in science, habitat protection and recovery, hatchery management, fisheries, enforcement, and outreach—to build a new framework for 21st century salmon and steelhead management. The framework is a matrix of measurable outcomes critical for healthy salmon and healthy fisheries, against which salmon-related strategies can be judged. The framework is organized around six key outcome areas:

WILD FISH POPULATIONS

Washington's wild fish populations are protected and restored

HABITAT

Habitat and ecosystem functions necessary for salmon survival and recovery are protected and restored

FISHERIES

Fisheries and hatchery management support rebuilding of wild fish populations and sustainable fisheries

CO-MANAGEMENT

WDFW and tribal representatives work in a collaborative and cooperative environment toward shared conservation goals

INTERNAL ALIGNMENT

WDFW staff work together across disciplines to achieve common objectives.

EXTERNAL SUPPORT

WDFW has the support, understanding and involvement of stakeholders and partners to help set and accomplish agency priorities and responsibilities

"We in Washington state recognize that the health of our salmon populations and the health of our state's economy are intertwined. Restoring and protecting our salmon populations and their habitats do more than just maintain our rivers, streams and salmon. They maintain our Northwest way of life."

U.S. Senator Patty Murray

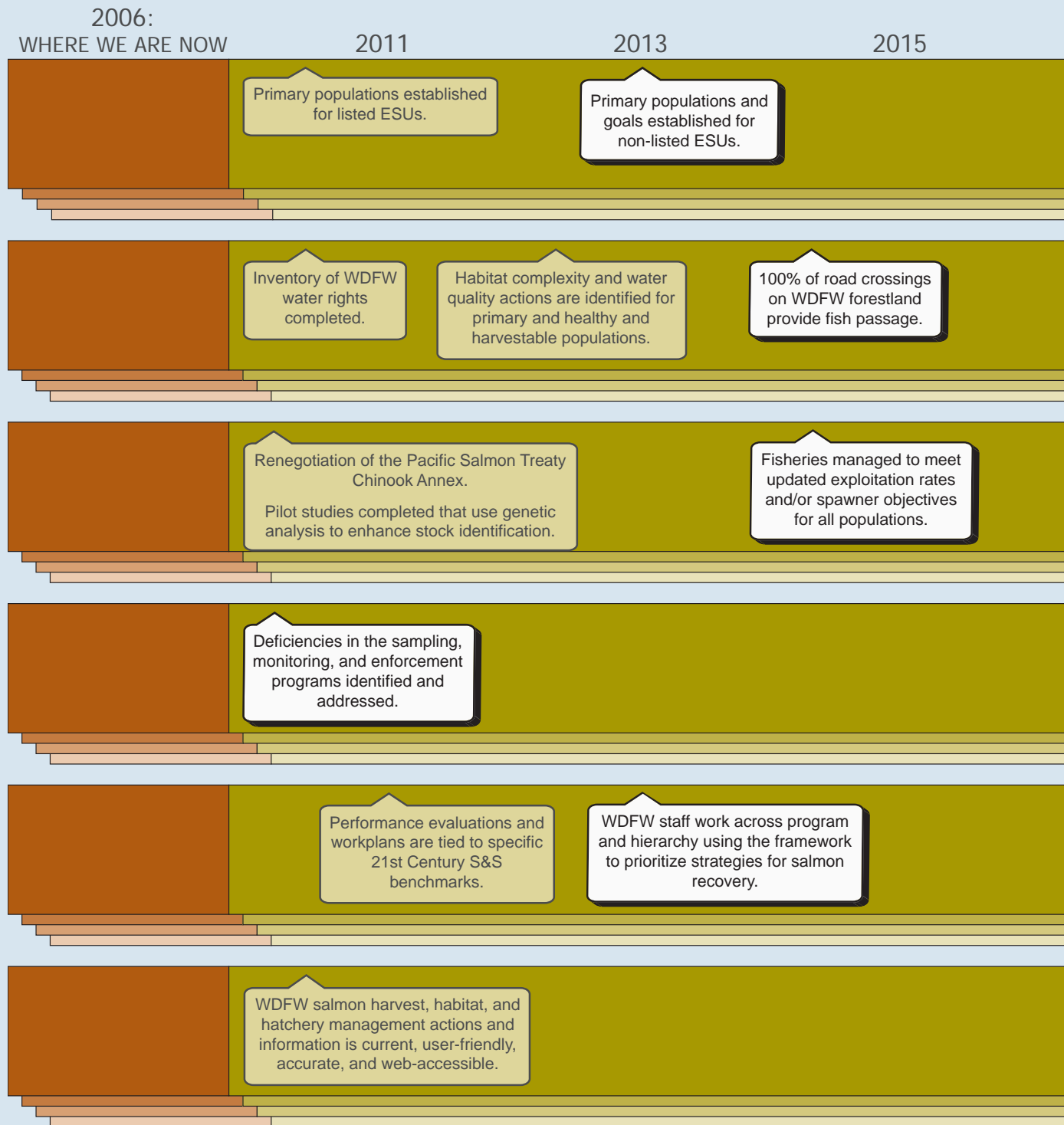
"Salmon are our religion."

Billy Frank, Jr.
Chairman,
Northwest Indian
Fisheries Commission

The framework is organized around six key outcome areas. Each key outcome area is made measurable with specific indicators of success. Benchmarks were plotted from 2007-2050, enabling us to measure our progress, evaluate our strategies, and synchronize our activities. The framework contains over 400 benchmarks. Below is a representation.

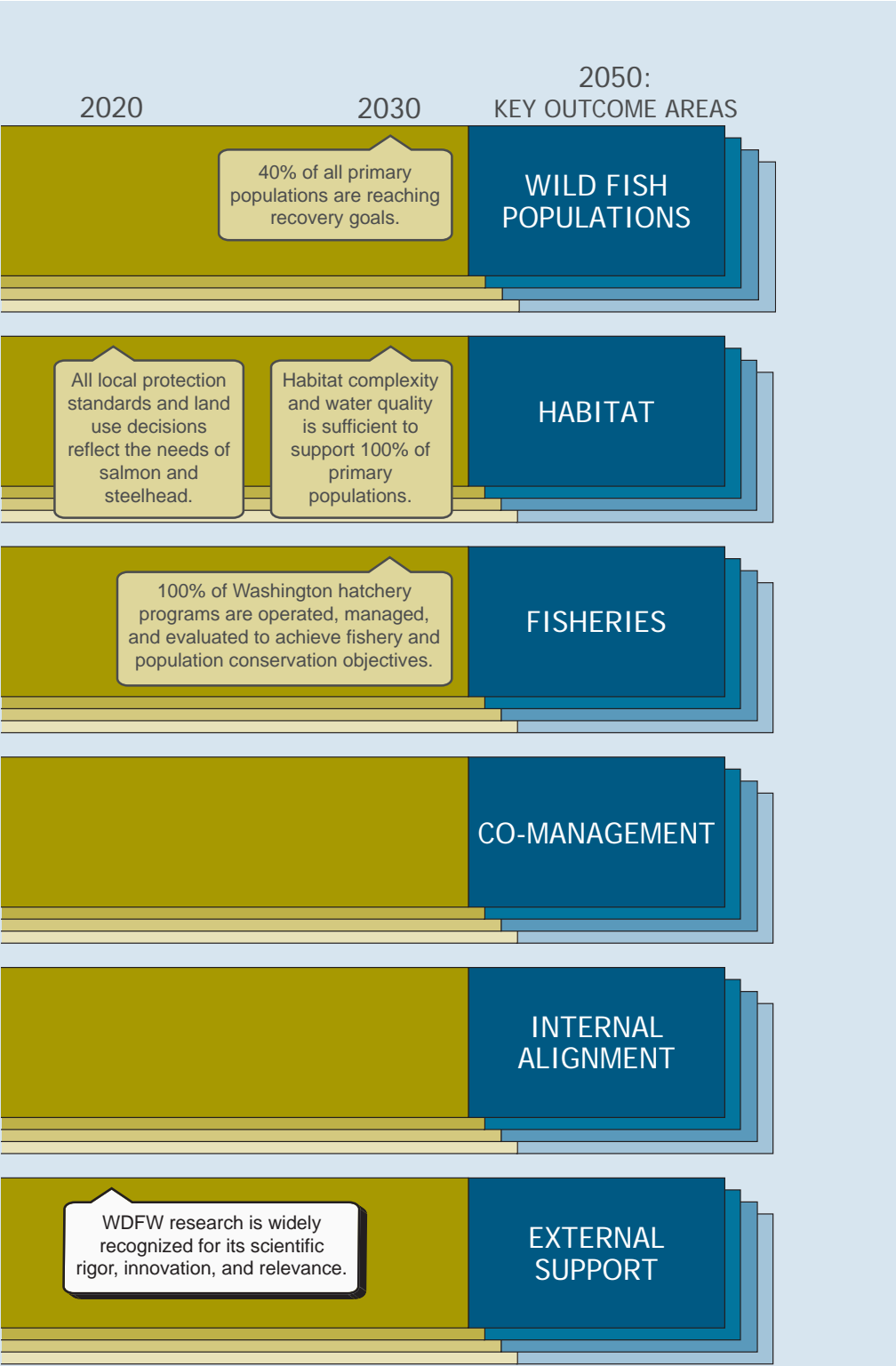
WDFW'S SALMON AND STEELHEAD FRAMEWORK

PURPOSE STATEMENT: WDFW shall manage salmon and steelhead to recovery & sustainability in a way that is science-based, well-documented, transparent, well-communicated, and accountable.





CONSTRUCTING A FRAMEWORK FOR CHANGE



WE STARTED AT THE END

We asked ourselves, if we were successful, how would we know it? What results would we see? We organized hundreds of responses into six key outcome areas.

WE MADE IT MEASURABLE

Each of these outcome areas headlines a dozen or more measurable results that would indicate success. Now we can target our resources toward achieving those specific results.

WE COMPARED WHERE WE ARE TODAY WITH WHERE WE NEED TO BE

We were clear about where we were starting from. The framework is far-reaching, but it's also grounded with an honest assessment of our current situation.

WE CLOSED THE GAP

To keep track of progress, the framework is constructed on a timeline with over 400 benchmarks taking us from where we are to where we need to be over fifty years.

WE STRATEGIZED

Once the framework was complete, we asked what we could do differently to get from where we were to meet the first set of benchmarks—across all the key outcome areas. This led to new interdisciplinary approaches, redirected funding, new budget requests, staff assignments, partnerships, and policy decisions.



IMPLEMENTING THE 21ST CENTURY SALMON AND STEELHEAD INITIATIVE

WDFW is using the framework to clarify priorities and direct our resources to long-term outcomes.

HABITAT PROTECTION & RESTORATION EFFORTS MUST BE SUPPORTED

Conservation and recovery of wild salmon and steelhead can occur only when our salmon recovery partners successfully protect and restore habitat. These partners, in turn, ask WDFW to provide critical scientific, technical and permitting assistance. WDFW must:

- ▶ Support partners in identifying special habitat conditions and actions necessary to reach wild fish population goals
- ▶ Protect habitat by providing additional technical assistance to effectively implement the Growth Management Act, Forest and Fish Act, Shorelines Management Act and other state statutes
- ▶ Support habitat restoration by providing engineering and technical assistance needed to implement salmon recovery projects

WDFW LANDS PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SALMON RECOVERY

WDFW lands have historically been purchased and managed for big game, waterfowl, fish and upland birds. Management of these lands has not always addressed the needs of salmon and steelhead. WDFW must:

- ▶ Develop and implement management plans for WDFW lands with additional emphasis on habitat needs for salmon and steelhead
- ▶ Identify, prioritize, and correct barriers to fish passage on WDFW lands
- ▶ Develop and implement policies to manage WDFW water rights consistent with salmon recovery

HATCHERIES ARE MEANS, NOT ENDS

Hatchery programs must be designed and evaluated relative to our conservation and fishery goals rather than as isolated fish production factories. Significant modifications to hatchery programs are required to provide fishery benefits with reduced risks to natural populations of salmon and steelhead. WDFW must:

- ▶ Reduce the number of hatchery fish spawning in rivers and as appropriate, use wild salmon and steelhead as broodstock to increase the productivity and diversity of wild populations
- ▶ Ensure that hatchery facilities are “wild salmon friendly” with passage facilities, intake screening, and pollutant control systems that comply with environmental regulations
- ▶ Eliminate programs that cannot be modified to meet conservation and fishery objectives in a cost-effective manner



SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES DEPEND ON CONSERVATION OF WILD FISH

Fishery management must change to protect and restore wild salmon and steelhead. Future fishing opportunities will increasingly depend on our ability to focus fisheries on hatchery-produced fish while meeting or exceeding ESA, recovery, or conservation goals for wild salmon and steelhead. WDFW must:

- ▶ Expand selective fisheries to increase opportunities for recreational and commercial fishing on hatchery fish and reduce the harvest of wild salmon
- ▶ Implement in-season DNA stock identification to direct fishing to areas with low impacts on wild salmon
- ▶ Improve fishery monitoring to assure that impacts to wild fish are accurately assessed
- ▶ Ensure compliance with fishing regulations
- ▶ Clearly identify fishery management objectives, review the status of wild salmon and steelhead, and adjust harvest rates to better protect at-risk stocks

SCIENCE IS A WISE INVESTMENT

Better information is needed to prioritize actions, efficiently use our limited salmon conservation and recovery funds, and adaptively manage our conservation and recovery efforts. WDFW must:

- ▶ Identify status of all primary populations of salmon and steelhead
- ▶ Track changes in critical habitat using satellite imagery and aerial photography
- ▶ Monitor numbers of juvenile fish that migrate to marine areas and adult fish that return to fresh water to spawn to determine effectiveness of conservation and recovery actions
- ▶ Assess the compliance with WDFW's Hydraulic Permit Approvals (HPAs) and the effectiveness of HPAs in protecting habitat

STATE/TRIBAL MANAGEMENT IS KEY TO SUCCESS

Successful State/Tribal co-management is a keystone of salmon recovery and sustainable fisheries. WDFW must:

- ▶ Work with our tribal co-managers in each watershed to develop joint state/tribal hatchery and harvest management objectives and plans
- ▶ Coordinate law enforcement with our tribal partners
- ▶ Ensure high level of WDFW staff knowledge and expertise in working with tribal co-managers



MANAGING IN THE FACE OF UNCERTAINTY

Aggressive goals have been set for salmon recovery, but without a baseline understanding of the health of our salmon populations, we don't know where we're starting from. This limits our ability to effectively evaluate the risks and benefits of our harvest and hatchery practices, and how we manage our land and water. At the same time, we cannot wait for perfect information to manage, nor can we meet our goals alone. Transparency, accountability, and partnerships are critical.

OUR MANAGEMENT DECISIONS MUST BE TRANSPARENT

We must ensure that our management assumptions, goals, strategies, and methods of evaluation are explicit and transparent. WDFW must:

- ▶ Annually evaluate and update hatchery, harvest, habitat, and hydro actions to ensure achievement of desired results
- ▶ Communicate progress on status of salmon and steelhead populations and implementation of hatchery and harvest reforms through the Department's website
- ▶ Identify fishery management objectives and provide post-season assessments of fishery management performance

INTEGRATED ALL-H MANAGEMENT ACCELERATES SALMON RECOVERY AT THE WATERSHED SCALE

The health of our fish populations and the quality of their habitat vary by watershed. Each watershed will require a unique recipe of changes to all the "H's"—habitat, hatchery, harvest, and hydro management—to meet salmon conservation and harvest goals. WDFW must:

- ▶ Coordinate hatchery, harvest, habitat and hydro actions to work together toward clear salmon recovery and sustainable fishery goals

PARTNERSHIPS ARE ESSENTIAL

Washington State is fortunate to have local governments, businesses, and organizations committed to salmon and steelhead conservation. Working with them as partners is critical to success. WDFW must:

- ▶ Continue to provide technical support to watershed "Lead Entities," Regional Recovery Boards, and Regional Fishery Enhancement Groups for habitat restoration
- ▶ Expand involvement of citizen advisory groups in management processes
- ▶ Support the Puget Sound Partnership in implementing the "Action Agenda" for restoring the health of Puget Sound

PHOTO By STEPHEN PENLAND



FROM THE **DIRECTOR**

In our state we're proud of the strong partnerships that have formed around salmon recovery. Watershed coalitions, volunteer organizations, representatives of agriculture and business, local, state and tribal governments have all joined together to protect and restore salmon.

Yet, climate change, population growth, and land conversion pose new threats to watershed health and to salmon and steelhead survival.

The Department challenged itself to define the meaning of success and a pathway to get there.

We needed to ensure that we were prepared to fulfill our responsibilities in recovering salmon and providing sustainable fisheries.

The 21st Century Salmon and Steelhead Initiative meshes harvest, hatchery and habitat strategies to provide Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife employees with a proactive, holistic approach to conserving Washington's salmon and steelhead.

The department is committed to leaving succeeding generations with healthy salmon and steelhead populations and sustainable fisheries.

We know we can't get there on our own. We are looking forward to working with our partners and tribal co-managers to develop and implement the strategies that lead to salmon and steelhead recovery.

Phil Anderson

Interim Director, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

LONG LIVE THE KINGS

Creating a new proactive "All-H" approach to salmon management was vital if WDFW was to meet its mandate of protecting and restoring salmon and providing sustainable fisheries.

WDFW turned to Long Live the Kings (LLTK), a private nonprofit salmon conservation organization with a 20-year track record of developing innovative management tools and demonstrating integrated "All-H" approaches to salmon recovery.

LLTK worked with us to create a framework that helped us think and act across and outside of our well-established "silos."

LLTK provided us the tools to frame the challenges in front of us and create an agency-wide set of priorities for WDFW. LLTK facilitated the intense and productive process of integrating concepts and solutions that resulted in the 21st Century Salmon and Steelhead framework.

For more information, visit www.lltk.org





21st Century Salmon & Steelhead Initiative

21ST CENTURY SALMON AND STEELHEAD PLANNING TEAM

From WDFW:

Margaret Ainscough, Public Affairs Director
Phil Anderson, Deputy Director, Resource Policy
Heather Bartlett, Salmon and Steelhead Division Manager
Craig Burley, Inland and Marine Resources Division Manager
Craig Busack, Fish Science Division Manager
Tom Davis, Legislative Liaison
Pat Frazier, Region 5 Fish Program Manager
Annette Hoffmann, Region 4 Fish Program Manager
Kirt Hughes, Region 6 Fish Program Manager
Sara LaBorde, Special Assistant to the Director
Bridget Moran, Environmental Resource Policy Lead
Pat Pattillo, Salmon Policy Coordinator
David Price, Habitat Information Assessment Section Manager
Jim Scott, Acting Deputy Assistant Director, Fish Program
Joe Stohr, Deputy Director, Operations
Lisa Veneroso, Intergovernmental Resource Management Program Lead
Ron Warren, Hatchery Division Manager

For Long Live the Kings (LLTK):

Barbara Cairns, Executive Director, LLTK
Betsy Daniels, Senior Associate, Triangle Associates Inc.
Natasha Dworkin, Communications Director, LLTK
Bill Masters, Project Manager, LLTK
Gary Smith, Principal, Gary Smith Company

PROJECT CONTACTS

Jair Reitsma
21st Century Salmon and Steelhead Project Manager
Phone: (360) 902-2811, Email: reitsjhr@dfw.wa.gov

Sara LaBorde
Special Assistant to the Director
Phone: (360) 902-2224



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Department of
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Mailing Address:
600 Capitol Way N.
Olympia, WA, 98501-1091

<http://www.wa.gov/wdfw>
(360) 902-2200

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Jeff Koenings, Director, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Jerry Gutzwiler, Chair, Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission.

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